

Letters from Romania 1995

January 3, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa, et al,

Some of this is a repeat of what I wrote in my letter to Grandpa, so just don't pay attention to the parts you already know, Grandpa.

It has now been four months since I left home. In some ways it seems like yesterday, and in other ways it seems like four years rather than four months. I have noticed, though, that as time goes on, it seems to go faster and faster. Before you know it, you will be having to come up to Kansas City (or wherever) to come get me - I returned home in only 18 months. That really is not too far away, I think.

As a as said in my letter to Grandpa, I am continuing to study Hungarian, although it is not easy. Let me quote you, as an example, a grammatical rule from my textbook, *Hungarian Basic Course*:

(This unit is discussing the formation of the past tense in Hungarian.) "The verb whose root ends in a sibilant (-s, -sz, or -z) or in -b or -d (other than -ad or -ed), -g, -gy, -k, -m, -p, -v, or the consonant -t preceded by a short vowel, form the past tense in the same way as other verbs except for the first person singular of the indefinite form, which ends in -ott, or -ett."

Got it??? I hope that someone out there understands it, because I sure don't.

There are other fun things to do here other than learn Hungarian, of course. I have done a lot of reading I have been meaning to do. I have wanted to read Tolkien's Ring trilogy for years, and finally I am making progress in doing so. I will not return home with it; I am planning to leave it here in the English Library the program has here, so here is another idea for a Christmas, birthday, or whatever gift for Browder some time: *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Don't to get *The Hobbit* since I already have it at home. I have also been a real reading some of my ESL teaching books, and some of the books that Phyllis sent over in her mailbag.

In addition to reading, I occasionally get out of town. Recently, I went to the little village of Homorod, about 25 km east of town. In Homorod there are many springs bubbling carbonated water from the ground. It is an attractive place, like something straight out of the Middle Ages.

Our English classes starts again next week, so that will keep me busy for the next 10 weeks. Some time in February, Phyllis and I must go to Cluj, Romania, to meet with the Bishop of the Reformed Church. There are many things to see in Cluj; I look forward to the visit. When I will get to Bulgaria I do not know - maybe in the spring, or this summer. There is a train from Bucharest to Sofia (the capital of Bulgaria) to Thessolonika, Greece that I would like to take. We'll see.

Love to all, Browder

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January 25, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa, et al,

As you can see, I'm back to hand-written letters again. The typewriter we got a month ago has already given out, so I'm back to hand writing everything again.

Our classes have started again, obviously. This is the third week of teaching already. I think my classroom situation (in other words, location of a suitable room) is somewhat solved now. It was a problem last term; I had to keep holding my classes in different rooms.

In three weeks (February 13th to 16th), Phyllis and I will be in Cluj, Romania, to do some business there. We will meet the Secretary to the Bishop of the Reformed Church for this district, we'll go to the university there to see about some English tests, etc.. Cluj is the historical "capital" of Romania. It is very beautiful from what I have heard. I look forward to seeing it. I'll send pictures, of course.

Since I told you about those of mouth ulcers that were giving me a small problem in November, I have had no other health problems up until this week. Twice now, this week, I have been awakened early in the morning by a sharp pain on my lower left side. A doctor (one of my students - so he speaks English) confirmed my suspicions: kidney stones. Probably from all the mineral water I've been drinking. Anyway, he gave me a pain killer, and anti-nausea drug, and a diuretic to help flush it away. With the primitive state of medical services here, there's not much else that can be done for it here. I'm hoping that time and the diuretic will take care of it. Please don't worry. I'm being taken care of. It doesn't always hurt - a few hours at a time, then it goes away. By the time you get this, it will probably be all over with already.

I got the 1995 Mission Yearbook - thanks. Can you do me a little favor? There are two students here who would love to have one. One is the young disabled woman mentioned in the Romania article, and the other is a young woman who wishes to enter seminary in the USA, and a PC USA seminary, preferably. Please send them surface rate. There's no rush to get them, just as long as they arrive sometime in 1995. It's not worth paying a high price to get them here faster. Surface rate is just fine.

It isn't all work and kidney stones and no play here. I do occasionally get around to see parts of the country around here. I recently went to a beautiful little village in the mountains called Pekas (pronounced PAY-kosh). And I'm going to visit Cluj in a few weeks - I'll write one of my newspaper articles about it. I'll send you one soon here (two week maybe?). Also, you might like to know that I'm seeing someone here. Her name is *[name removed]*, she's 22, works in a travel agency, and speaks English very well. Don't get your hopes up - it really isn't even a relationship yet. But we do like each other. *[Ed. Note: We developed a friendship, but it never developed into the romance I wished it to be.]*

Mother, thanks for letting me know how Dawn and her kids are doing. I think of them and pray for them often.

Love to all, Browder

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February 10, 1995

Dear Mother,

Here is article number three for the Girard Press. Sorry it's taken me so long. I've been very very busy with teaching. Give my apologies to the Editor. Next week I'm going to Cluj, the capital of Transylvania. My next article will be about it. Hopefully, I can have that to you by mid March. Please type this up and send it to the Girard Press. I will include pictures with my next article, the one about Cluj.

It's been two weeks now since my kidney stones bothered me; I've had no problems since. Love,
Browder

Article III - "The New Challenges of Capitalism for Transylvania."

"Down the street from my apartment building is 'Levi', a tiny store assembled in someone's living room on the ground floor apartment. They sell toiletries, candies, and a three to four varieties of produce items; almost the exact same items as the 50 + other tiny stores just like it in this town of 40,000. Called 'uzlets', they are symbol of the roots of capitalism growing in what was once a hard-line communist country.

Five years ago, with the end of communism in Romania, the government has been lethargically privatizing state-run industries and has allowed small businesses to open. The communal farms have been closed, the land has been distributed to the people, and the process of selling state-run industries has begun. Privatization has not come without price, however. Inefficient industries have been forced to close, and the privatized ones have laid off thousands of employees. For example, a local machinery factory which was privatized recently cut its work force by 95 percent: from 2000 to just 100. For this reason, unemployment is high.

Most consumer products are imported, mainly from Germany, Hungary, and Turkey. This has created a huge negative trade imbalance for Romania. To pay for these important products, Romania must pay in hard currency. Its own currency, the leu, it is not recognized on the international money market. This hurts the Romanian economy because all of its hard currency is flowing out of the country, thus fueling inflation (about 100 percent).

It is the uzlets that sell the majority of these imported goods. They are better quality than the equivalent Romanian-made products, so the uzlets cater to the preferences of the consumer. 'Why should we buy Romanian products', a woman remarked, 'when it imported ones are of better quality?'

Yesterday I returned to the uzlet 'Levi.' Next to the counter were several boxes of oranges and a great effort. 'We just got them today from Turkey. They're very nice', she said. I glanced around the tiny store, looking for some Romania made products. I saw none. I asked her what brands of cookies she had, and she showed me some. 'Were they made in Romania?' I asked. 'Of course not!' she laughed. 'Who would buy them if they were?'

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February 10, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa, et al,

This is just a short note to assure you that I am fine. My kidney stones haven't bothered me for two weeks now. Maybe it's gone away? (Knock on wood.) Next week I'm going to Cluj-I'll write you a more detailed letter about it when I returned.

In an early January, Phyllis and I went to a little village in the mountains called Pekas, (pronounced PAY-kosh) by way of a town called Gheorghieni (pronounced geor-JEN-ee). I include some photos, and a map of my travels in Romania thus far.

Also, in the pictures of the Hungarian Folk Dance, I am not among the dancers! Please make this clear it if you share these pictures with the Girard Press. I am also not riding the hay wagon shown in the picture, or the man in the picture selling things at Pekas.

Love to all, Browder

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February 21, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa, et al,

I have returned from Cluj; we came back Thursday night 2/16. It was an interesting visit. We stayed at the Reformed Bishop's house there in Cluj while we tended to business. It appears that Phyllis and I will not be moved there this summer, because this Diaconal Center they are building there is nowhere near completion. So it's pretty clear that we will be here in Odorheiu Secuiesc ("Udvarhely") the rest of our time here in Romania.

We went to see many things while there: Babes Bolyai University (pronounced BAW-besh BOWL-ya-ee), the Orthodox Church, St. Matthias Catholic Church, the Ethnographic Museum, and the History Museum of Transylvania. It's really a very interesting place. As I said, my next article for the Girard Press will be about Cluj. Now for a list of odds and ends:

1. It's been nearly a month since my trouble with the kidney stones. I'm not sure if it's due to the "turpentine medicine," or luck, but it hasn't caused me any trouble since. Let's hope it won't flare up again anytime soon. Keep your fingers crossed.
2. How much money do I have in my bank account?
3. Taxes - I can probably file 10-40EZ, since I am paid in the USA, not Romania. Phyllis and recommends that you send me the tax form - I have until June 15th to have it sent in. I also need an Arizona tax form.
4. April 2 - 6 I will be at an English camp near the city of Miercurea Ciuc. More details about it later.
5. Some things are almost impossible to find here. Could you be so kind as to send me the following items by surface rate? Reimburse yourselves from my bank account, send me the receipts, so than PC

USA can reimburse me for supplies. The list is - five standard size college ruled spiral notebooks, 500 large white index cards, 50 manila file folders, 200 airmail envelopes, and one love note from my mother.

6. Daddy, do you have any contacts with Gideon's International? In the the local hospital here, there is no form of entertainment for the patients. No TV, radio, newspapers, or even a Bible. It is permissible now to have them in the hospital, but nobody has gotten around to placing them here yet. Perhaps the Gideons would be interested in sending a few Hungarian language Bibles to the hospital here, like 50 or so.

That's all the news for now. Love to all, Browder

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FEBRUARY 27, 1995

DEAR MOTHER, DADDY, GRANDPA, ET AL,

I AM GOING TO TRY ONCE AGAIN TO USE THIS PERSNICKITY TYPEWRITER. ONLY SOME OF THE LETTERS WORK IN LOWER CASE SO I HAVE TO USE ALL CAPITALS AND THEY DON'T WORK VERY WELL EITHER. I'M DOING OK. IT'S BEEN A MONTH SINCE MY TROUBLE WITH THE KIDNEY STONES AND AS OF THIS WRITING THEY HAVE NOT RECURRED. WHILE I WAS IN CLUJ I HAD A BAD FALL BUT IT HAS HEALED UP PRETTY WELL NOW SO NOT TO WORRY.

SORRY FOR ALL THE MISTAKES THIS IS THE WORLD'S WORST TYPEWRITER. ANYWAY THE YOUNG WOMAN I WAS SEEING [name removed] HAS GONE TO HUNGARY TO LOOK FOR A JOB AND HAS NOT RETURNED. MAYBE SHE FOUND ONE WHO KNOWS BUT ANYWAY IT HAS BEEN WEEKS SINCE I HAVE SEEN HER SO I AM BACK TO SQUARE ONE WITH THE ROMANCE DEPARTMENT.

PEOPLE HERE SAY THIS IS THE MILDEST WINTER THEY HAVE SEEN EVER. APPARENTLY IT IS MUCH COLDER AND SNOWIER HERE DURING THE WINTER. THERE WERE A LOT OF FLOODS EARLIER THIS YEAR IN FRANCE GERMANY AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN WESTERN EUROPE BUT NOT HERE. I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL SPRING COMES THOUGH.

THERE REALLY ISN'T MUCH TO TELL IN THIS LETTER. MY CLASSES ARE CONTINUING WELL, AND THIS TERM WILL END AT THE END OF MARCH. PHYLLIS AND I BOTH HAVE BIRTHDAYS IN MARCH (HERS IS THE 16TH) SO WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR OURSELVES. IT SHOULD BE FUN. MOSTLY I AM WRITING YOU TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I AM WELL AND NOT TO WORRY ABOUT ME ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE NICE TO HEAR FROM MY FAMILY ONCE IN A WHILE. IT'S BEEN THREE WEEKS SINCE I HAVE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM ANYONE. PHYLLIS ON THE OTHERHAND GETS 10 LETTERS (THAT'S RIGHT TEN!) EVERY WEEK MOSTLY FROM OLD FRIENDS AND PEOPLE IN HER CHURCH.

LOVE TO ALL BROWDER [Ed. Note: I gave up entirely on the typewriter after this letter!]

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April 10, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, and Grandpa,

I'm sorry that I've got insofar behind in my letter writing-I have been very busy lately. No medical problems to report - no kidney stones, and my knee injury in February is now just a dark scar (a very small one). I did get a bad cold in Brasov, but I'm over that now, too.

As I told you before, I was in the city of Brasov (pronounced BRASH-ov) during the last week of March to visit Brett McMichael. Phyllis and I went to visit the orphanages where he works. There were some problems with them, yes, but they weren't nearly as bad as the news reports say in the USA. Many improvements have occurred in the past five years. I will write an article for the Girard Press about them soon.

Speaking of that, be expecting another article soon about Dracula. While in Brasov, I went to the village of Bran to see the famed "Dracula's Castle" there. Even though Vlad Tepes, the real Count Dracula, never actually live there, it was interesting anyway. Despite my fear of heights, I even went up to the lookout tower on the highest point of the castle(see postcard). Be sure to save this postcard so that it can be used for my article to the Girard Press.

Last week, I went to an English camp in the village of Ilyafalva (pronounced ee-eh-FALL-vah) for five days. It was a lot of fun for everyone. When I eventually get pictures developed, I'll send you some. That's about all. Classes begin again this week.

Love to all, Browder

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April 27, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa, et al,

I am doing fine here. The weather is finally starting to warm up here - we've had a few days in the 70s. So I guess spring has finally arrived in Romania.

I hope that you got my latest article for the Girard Press about Dracula. If not, I'll send another copy asap. Send me a copy when it comes out in the paper.

The last time I sent in an expense account to the PC USA, I asked them for an advance of \$1,000 to cover my trip to Italy in September. This will probably appear on my May bank deposit, so don't be surprised when you see it. I think that in June I will need to do an international money transfer of \$1,500. More details about that when necessary. By the way, how much do I have in my account now?

The Monday after Easter, I participated in a custom practiced in central and eastern Europe. On the day after Easter, men go to women's homes to say a little poem and place a few drops of perfume on her head. She in turn presents him with a decorated egg. The man stays to visit a while, depending on how many women he plans yet to visit. So, I bought my little bottle of cheap perfume (600 lei, or about 30¢ for 50 ml), I wrote a cute little poem in English, and spent the day visiting attractive young

women. It was fun; I think my next newspaper article will be about it.

On Sunday afternoons, Phyllis, some students and I go to the local hospital to visit the abandoned children. There are about 20 of them, mostly gypsy children. One of them is an eighteen month old girl. She was born the 11th child in a family that simply couldn't take another mouth to feed, so she was abandoned by her parents at the hospital. She is very underweight and is unable to crawl. The nurses don't allow toys in the cribs, and spend little time with the children. The children receive little stimulation. You might think that they would be crying for affection, but instead the nursery is deathly silent as the children simply lay in their cribs staring at the ceiling. What time we spend there is little, but at least some time holding them and playing with them is better than no time at all. It's really heartbreaking sometimes. One little girl is 3 years old. She can crawl, but cannot walk or speak. She doesn't even recognize her own name.

My English classes are OK. They keep me sufficiently busy. I can't wait until this summer - I would really like to visit Bulgaria. We'll see.

Love to all, Browder

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May 23, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa, and everybody,

It's been a while since I last wrote. Not a whole lot of earth shattering news has happened since we talked on the phone, Mother, but I can ramble on about a few things. I am awaiting for a response from my friend in Slovakia, as to whether or not I'm going to visit him. Whether or not he responds, however, I am still going to Slovakia and Poland this summer regardless. I'll let you know the dates and probable places when I know. Also on the subject of traveling, all PC USA European mission personnel have a reunion in Torino, Italy, September 11th to 15th this fall. So, I plan to do a lot of traveling around Europe these next few months.

RAIN, RAIN, RAIN!!! That's all it's been like here for weeks now. It has rained probably four days out of five here since late March. The temperature rarely gets above 65 degrees Fahrenheit. My students say that it doesn't normally rain this much in Romania; that this is a really wet spring. I see it on the news also that you've been getting more of your fair share in the Midwest again, too. Let's both try not to float away in any case, OK?

By the time you receive this letter, my teaching term will be over, and I will be free for the summer. I can't hardly wait! Our final exams are June 5th and 6th, then we must of course grade the tests and post the grades. On June 10th, we are going to Cluj to take some of our advanced level students to Babes Bolyai University to take an English test there. We don't anticipate being there any more than a couple of days. Phyllis is flying her son here to Romania to visit for a few weeks at the end of June, then she is leaving the first of July to be in the USA for a month. So I'll have the place to myself for a while. However, I believe that I will be doing a lot of traveling during that time, to Slovakia and to places in Romania (like the monasteries near Suceava, and the palace in Sinaia), so I won't be home much myself during that time. Phyllis' son is bringing me \$1,000 cash, so I will give him a check for that amount. That saves me from having to do an international money transfer, and paying a 7 to 10 percent commission on the transfer. So be expecting a large check to come rolling through the account in early

July. By that time, I should have my advance from PC USA.

Recently Phyllis and I went to the school of one of the students in one of my beginning English classes. She teaches in a one-room schoolhouse in a village close to town. It was like pictures I have seen of schools in the USA at the turn of the 20th century: rough wooden floors, an old tile stove and wood pile in the back of the room for heat, an old beat up chalkboard, and doubled desks neatly arranged in rows. She has eight students: three first graders, and five third graders. She first gave each group of children a math lesson for about 45 minutes, then released them to play for about 20 minutes. After that, a Romanian language lesson, then more play, and finally a Hungarian language lesson before she left at 11:00 a.m.. It was an interesting experience.

Well, that's about it. If you don't mind, to save me postage, Mother, would you copy this letter and distribute it to my sisters and whoever else you think is interested? Thanks. Gwyn and crowd, thanks for the letters. Dawn, I continue to pray for you and your kids. Write when you can.

Love to all, Browder

P. S. Still no health problems.

P. S. S. I got the box and notebooks, envelopes, et cetera. Thanks. However, I never got the receipt for the amount.

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June 14, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa, et al,

It's time for another letter, so here it is. I talked to Dawn yesterday. She liked my idea of coming to Budapest for a visit with her little brother, and a chance to get away from home for a while. She has applied for a passport (I'm surprised she didn't already have one) and should receive it in a few weeks. The best time for her to come is July 17th and return July 24th. I will attempt to coordinate this with my trip to Poland and Slovakia earlier in the month. I still have no exact dates yet; I'll let you know as soon as I know that.

School is over! At least until September, anyway. I've done some touring of local villages close to town here. It's like stepping back hundreds of years into the past, really. I took some nice pictures of the villages Tibod, Szentomas, and Arvatfalva. I'll send copies when I get them developed.

As I write this, Phyllis is in Bucharest picking up her son at the airport. After they tour Bucharest, Brasov and Sinaia, they are coming here to do some sightseeing together. Then all three of us are going to see the painted monasteries near Suceava, I hope. Then on June 30th, she is returning to the USA for a month of family reunions and running around all over the country there before returning to Romania in mid-August. She is taking a small package of trinkets from me to mail to you. They are clearly marked as to which trinket is intended for whom. I am glad that she can do this for me. Phyllis is a very intense personality - she goes nonstop. She kind of gets on my nerves sometimes, but I'm still surprised that we get along as well as we do.

I told you in the last letter of going to visit the school where one of my students is a school teacher. This week I went to her sister's school in the village of Arvatvalva, about 10 mi. from our town. In this village of 60 people, there is a one-room schoolhouse, where she teaches for students. She explained that she has a budget of 5000 lei (about \$2.50) per month for school supplies. Obviously this is woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the students. She basically has to do without such things as art supplies, paper, and even chalk sometimes. It is remarkable what she has been able to do just using things found in nature (nuts, etc) or are thrown away by others. I was thinking that perhaps as a project for a Sunday School class or Vacation Bible School class, the students could make a collection of school supplies to send it to fellow school students in Romania. Construction paper, colored pencils and pens, felt, glue sticks, scissors, colored chalk, yarn, transparent tape, double-backed tape, and other such school supplies are sorely needed. These supplies could be sent to me, and I would distribute them to the teachers for use in Arvatfalva and Kadicsfalva, and perhaps other village schools as well. Give it some thought, anyway.

Recently, Phyllis and I took 23 advanced students to Cluj for a Romanian government English test at a university there in Cluj. They all did well, some of them exceptionally well. We are proud of them all. Well, that's about all - I'll let you know of my vacation dates and plans soon.

Love to all, Browder

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Postcard dated July 6, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, and Grandpa,

A few days ago I returned from a trip to North East Romania to see the cities of Iasi (pronounced YAHSH), and Suceava (pronounced soo-CHAV-uh) , and I went to see some of the famous painted monasteries of Bukovina. They are famous because the frescoes were painted on the outside as well as the inside of the monastery. Few of these painted monasteries remain today. Ten days from now I go to Budapest to visit Dawn for a week, then if I have enough money I'm going on to Slovakia and Krakow, Poland for a few days before returning to Romania. Be sure to let me know how the move is going. And, as before when you moved to Girard, please don't trust the movers with my coin collection! Take it with you in the car.

Love to all, Browder

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Postcard dated to July 26, 1995

Dear Mother and Daddy and Grandpa,

I am at this writing in Trencin, in the Republic of Slovakia. I am visiting John Michael, a PC USA Diaconal Worker here. In a few days I am going to Krakow, Poland, then I return home. I'm rather tired of traveling, but there's more yet to see. I'll send you a card from Krakow.

Love to all, Browder

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August 8, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa, also Dawn, Gwyn, and families,

I returned from my travels last week. I probably should have written sooner, but, well... well be glad you're getting this now!

First, a few open personal notes:

Mother and Daddy - I would have sent a copy of this directory to your new address, but you didn't write me the zip code, so I am sending a copy of this to Dawn to send to you. As soon as I get your full address, I can write to you. I hope that the move went smoothly.

Gwyn - Thanks for writing me so regularly. I think that the pan flute was meant to be more for decoration than for actual use! But if you can manage to play 'Dixie' on the thing, then so much the better. Also, I've seen some better gypsy rings on the market, so when I return home, I'll send you and Dawn and mother a few better ones. You can give the other to Hannah or something.

Dawn - Please send the extra copy of this letter for the reason mentioned above. Also note the gypsy ring deal in Gwyn's note. I'm glad that in spite of a brother who isn't much into casinos and night life, clothes shopping fiascos, and an 'episode', that your trip to Budapest was enjoyable. Thank you once again for coming to visit your little brother.

Grandpa - I hope that you enjoyed the postcard pictures of churches near to where I live. Many churches here are walled, to protect them from the Turks and other ruffians who roamed around here in Transylvania a few centuries ago. Most fruits and vegetables are available in the market now that almost everything is in season. I cannot recall ever having seen currants before, but they are in season now, both black and red. Also raspberries, melons and some apples.

Well, what happened to me on my vacation, you might ask? Even if you don't ask I'll tell you anyway! First, on my way to Hungary, I went to Oradea, Romania, to visit a young woman I had met a few weeks before it in Iasi. (She is engaged, and I'm not interested in her anyway, so no point in conjecturing!) It seemed like a good way to visit this historic city, so I went to Oradea to pay her a brief visit. While I was there, she spent the whole time telling me about how she and her fiance wanted to emigrate to America, and could I help her get a visa? A green card, perhaps? I told her that I had no authority to issue visas of any type, and that there was little if anything that I could do to help her. She is not the first person to ask me for help in getting to America.

From Oradea, I went to Budapest by bus, but not before a little adventure at the Romanian-Hungarian border. When we arrived at the Hungarian border, all the people including me were approved, but the bus itself did not have the proper papers to enter Hungary. So, we were dumped out onto the highway, refunded our money, and the bus turned around and headed back to Oradea! So here I was with the other 40 passengers, trying to figure out what to do next. It was dark out (9:30 p.m.), and there were two options: walk the 8 mi. to the border town and take the morning train to Budapest, or wait along the highway and pray that a bus would come that had some available spaces. After an hour, luck was with me - a bus came, pulled up right next to me, opened the door, and announced that 14 seats were

available! So I got to Budapest in time to meet Dawn at the airport.

Dawn and I had a good time and Budapest. We had a few adventures there as well - cruising up the (blue? It was brown!) Danube, buying clothes in the Hungarian department store, and other things - I'll let her tell the details. After I left her at the airport, I dashed to the train station and went to Bratislava, the capital of the Slovak Republic. Czechoslovakia split peacefully two years ago into two separate countries, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. I spent that afternoon strolling around downtown Bratislava, then the next day I went to Trenchin, Slovakia, to visit John Michael, a PC USA missionary there. He showed me around Trenchin Castle, and the town, then the next day we went to see a famous palace in Bojnice (pronounced boy-NEET-say) Slovakia. Then the two of us decided to go to Krakow, Poland. So we went there for two days. Krakow is a wonderful city, very beautiful. It was spared the destruction that Warsaw suffered during World War Two, so it was really enjoyable. I tried to go find the factory where Arthur Schindler first started to shelter Jews in his factory (incredibly, it is still there, untouched after all these years) but I could not find it due to my map of Krakow not taking into consideration all of the streets closed for construction.

From Krakow, we went to Oswiecim, Poland, better known as Auschwitz. We first to visit Auschwitz I, where most of the tortures of political prisoners took place. You can see the Suffocation Rooms, where 20 people at a time were placed in an airtight room, where they suffocated to death. Also the Standing Rooms, tiny rooms about 2 ft. by 2 ft. by 6 ft. where four persons were placed to starve to death. Since there was no place to sit or lay down in such a tiny space, especially not with four people in at, they were called the Standing Rooms. I saw the wall against which untold thousands were executed by firing squad. As you visit these tragic places, it is difficult to imagine how such a thing could have happened. You say to yourself, 'people died in this very place where I am now standing. Thousands of them.' It is a grim place. Then we went to Auschwitz II, better known as Birkenau. This is where the mass executions took place. The crematoriums and the gas chambers are still there, although damaged by explosions done by the SS in their hasty retreat before the Soviet Army in 1945. You can still see the steps down which millions of people went unknowingly to their deaths. I'll send you pictures when I get them developed.

I returned home a few days later. Tired but glad that I went. I saw a lot in those two weeks. The next trip on the agenda is to Torino, Italy. The conference is for all European PC USA missionaries, from September 11th to 15th. I am leaving Romania on September 4th, because I want see some things along the way, such as the Venice and Ljubljana, Slovenia (not to be confused with Slavonia in Croatia, where the war is!) Trust me, I'll stay away from the war zone, although I might visit far northern Croatia and Zagreb, depending upon the conditions there. I won't go if there is danger there. I'm running a out of room on this page, so this is about all I have to say for now.

Love to all, Browder

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Postcard dated September 6, 1995

Dear Mother and Daddy and Grandpa,

I'm sitting in St. Peter's Square as I write this. It is an incredible place - you walk around with your mouth open saying "wow...wow...wow." I've seen the major parts of it, including the Sistine Chapel. Tomorrow I see the Roman Forum then I'm off to see Pompey near Naples, then to Torino. I miss you

all. *[Ed. Note: I did not go to Pompey; I went to Genoa instead.]*

Love to all, Browder

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Postcard dated September 9, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa,

I am now in Genoa, Italy, seeing the sights here - namely, Christopher Columbus's home, and St. George's palace, where Marco Polo, as a prisoner of the Genoese, told of his travels in Asia. Tomorrow I go to Torino. Having a great time!

Love to all, Browder

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Postcard dated September 12, 1995

Dear Mother and Daddy,

I have arrived here to the retreat in Torre Pelece, Italy. There are almost 20 of us here. In addition to seeing the Italian Alps, we are learning about the Waldensian Church. Today we went to the Waldensian Museum at Barba College, a simple building of rock where early Waldensian pastors were trained in the 13th through 16th centuries

Love to all, Browder

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October 3, 1995

Dear Mother and Daddy,

I hope you got my recent letter about my travels in Italy. *[Ed. Note: This letter has been lost, unfortunately.]* It was great but it will be a while before I go to Western Europe again, on account of the cost. I spent much more than I had planned.

I have a special request of you, one that I wish that I didn't need to ask, but I feel that it is important. Could you possibly ask Dawn if she would be willing to fly me home to you or to her place for Christmas? I have numerous important things that I need to do in preparation for my return in June, which would be very difficult or impossible to do from here. I list them below:

1. I must contact the placement office at NAU to reactivate my file, and explain some things to them that would be difficult to do by letter.
2. Get some cash from my bank account to bring back to Romania. I'm desperately low.

3. Get my new MasterCard, which I can't use in Romania but I can use in Hungary. To activate the card, I must call them and tell them information I put on the application form. This would be very hard to do from here.

4. Bring home a load of these books and stuff I've been collecting since I came. It would be virtually impossible to bring it all home in June. If I can make two trips though, I think that I can do it.

5. Make arrangements to have my Arizona driver's license renewed. It expires in March, but I can renew it by mail if I call them. I must declare a new address in Arizona, so I need to contact some people (probably in Douglas) who would be willing to let me use their address. They won't send it out of state to Pennsylvania, or especially not Romania!

6. Make contacts concerning places I might stay in Arizona when I go there for job interviews next summer.

7. And, of course, I'd like to see my family!

If I could pay for it myself, I would, but I cannot. I know that you also cannot afford it. I feel that if you asked Dawn for me, it wouldn't be quite so abrupt to her.

Our telephone has been doing much better, so you might try to call me to reply to this letter. If she agrees to do so, I can make a reservation in Budapest (not Bucharest; it's much more expensive).

Anyway, I'm doing well, and if I don't come home at Christmas it won't be the end of the world. But it would make my return in June significantly easier if I could do some of these things state side rather than try to do them from here, or wait until June to do them. Let me know asap.

Love to all, Browder

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Postcard dated November 7, 1995

Dear Mother, Daddy, Grandpa,

Just a note to assure you that I haven't forgotten how to write! I've been quite busy lately with classes and all. Recently a fellow PC USA missionary, John Michael, came to Romania to visit. We went to see the palace in Sinaia, the Black Church in Brasov, and the medieval German city of Sibiu. I'm looking forward to seeing you all soon!

Love to all, Browder